

REMARKS

The application contains claims 1-3, 7-16, 20-33 and 37-47. Claims 1, 15 and 32 are hereby amended. No new matter has been introduced. Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-4, 14-17 and 32-34 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Sherman (U.S. Patent 7,046,690) in view of Bajic (U.S. Patent Application Publication 2003/0227893) and further in view of Wu et al. (U.S. Patent 7,292,562). As claims 4, 17 and 34 were previously canceled, the rejection of these claims is moot. While disagreeing with the grounds of rejection of independent claims 1, 15 and 32, Applicant has amended these claims in order to further clarify the distinction of the claimed invention over the cited art.

Claim 1, as amended, recites a method in which a plurality of access points in a WLAN use a common BSSID to communicate with a mobile station. Ordinarily, according to WLAN convention, each access point should acknowledge and respond to all uplink messages that are directed to its BSSID. In the method of claim 1, however, each access point is also assigned a respective MAC address, in addition to the BSSID (as stated literally in paragraph 0010 of the present patent application - referring to the published version, US 2004/0063455). The access points are configured to emulate mobile station communications, and therefore acknowledge only those uplink messages that are addressed to these respective MAC addresses, rather than acknowledging all uplink messages on the BSSID. As a result, the access points can be deployed close together, giving good radio coverage, without risk that multiple access points will send interfering messages to the same mobile station. (For further explanation, see, for

example, paragraphs 0005, 0008 and 0010 of the present patent application.)

In rejecting claim 1, the Examiner acknowledged that Sherman and Bajic do not teach assigning a respective MAC address to access points or emulation of mobile station communications by access points, but held that Wu teaches these elements of the invention. Wu, however, neither teaches nor suggests that an access point should be assigned a MAC address in addition to its BSSID. Wu does not mention "MAC addresses" at all; but he does make clear that the only address the access point has is its BSSID, while source and destination addresses in the WLAN belong to mobile stations:

"With reference again to FIG. 2, once a station 204 is authenticated to and associated with an AP 202, the station 204 can communicate with another station 204 in the WLAN. In particular, a station 204 can send a message having a source address, a basic service set identification address ("BSSID"), and a destination address, to its associated AP 202. The AP 202 can then distribute the message to the station 204 specified as the destination address in the message." (col. 4, lines 15-23)

Furthermore, it is not clear what aspect of the operation of Wu's access point the Examiner considers to constitute emulation of mobile station communications. In regard to this point, the Examiner cited the transmission of RTS and CTS frames by the station and access point that is shown in Wu's Fig. 4. The RTS/CTS handshake, however, is a standard communication sequence between a station and an access point according to the IEEE 802.11 standard. It does not require the access point to be configured or to emulate anything other than a standard access point.

Thus, the cited references fail to teach or suggest at least two novel elements of claim 1:

- Assigning respective MAC addresses to access points in addition to the BSSID.
- Emulation of mobile station communications by access points.

Claim 1 is therefore patentable over the cited art.

Independent claims 15 and 32 recite a method and apparatus that operate on similar principles to those of claim 1 and include the novel elements noted above. Therefore, claims 15 and 32 are also patentable for the reasons explained with regard to claim 1. In view of the patentability of the independent claims, dependent claims 2, 3, 14, 16 and 33 are also believed to be patentable.

Dependent claims 7-13, 20-31 and 37-47 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Sherman in view of Bajic and Wu and further in view of one or more of Honkasalo et al. (U.S. Patent Application Publication 2003/0210674), Chari et al. (U.S. Patent 7,016,328), and Melpignano et al. (U.S. Patent Application Publication 2003/0003912). In view of the patentability of independent claims 1, 15 and 32, these dependent claims are also believed to be patentable.

Applicant believes the amendments and remarks presented above to be fully responsive to all of the grounds of rejection raised by the Examiner. In view of these amendments and remarks, all of the claims now pending in this application are believed to be in condition for allowance. Prompt notice to this effect is requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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